

Impact of Entrepreneurship Development Programs on Students' Knowledge, Attitude and Entrepreneurial Intention among Undergraduate and Postgraduate Students

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Abstract

Entrepreneurship Development Programs (EDPs) have emerged as an essential pedagogical intervention within higher education to cultivate Entrepreneurial competencies, foster self-employment orientation, and strengthen innovation capacity among students. The present empirical study evaluates the effectiveness of a structured three-day Entrepreneurship Development Program conducted in 7 different colleges at different time intervals for undergraduate (UG) and postgraduate (PG) students by examining changes in three core Entrepreneurial parameters: Knowledge, Attitude, and Intention. A pre-test and post-test was adopted, and data were collected from 502 participants using a structured, validated questionnaire. Descriptive and comparative statistical analyses were employed to measure the magnitude and direction of change across demographic variables such as gender, educational level, residence, and business family background. The findings indicate substantial positive improvement across all three parameters, with particularly strong gains in Entrepreneurial attitude and Intention. Female students, undergraduate participants, and students from business families demonstrated comparatively higher levels of positive change. The study provides robust empirical evidence supporting the effectiveness of short-term, intensive Entrepreneurship Education interventions and offers valuable insights for curriculum designers, policymakers, and institutions seeking to strengthen entrepreneurial ecosystems through education.

Keywords: Entrepreneurship Development Program; Entrepreneurial Knowledge; Entrepreneurial Attitude; Entrepreneurial Intention; Higher Education; Students

1. Introduction

Entrepreneurship is widely recognized as a critical driver of economic growth, innovation, and employment generation. In developing economies, entrepreneurship assumes even greater importance as it addresses challenges related to unemployment, underemployment, and inclusive development. Higher educational institutions play a pivotal role in fostering entrepreneurial competencies by integrating structured Entrepreneurship Development Programs (EDPs) into academic curricula.

Entrepreneurship Education extends beyond theoretical knowledge; it focuses on shaping attitudes, developing intentions, and nurturing skills required to identify opportunities, manage risks, and create sustainable ventures. Previous research has emphasized that entrepreneurial intention is a strong predictor of actual entrepreneurial

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behaviour, making it essential to understand how educational interventions influence students' mindset and aspirations.

The present study evaluates the impact of a three-day Entrepreneurship Development Program on students' entrepreneurial Knowledge, Attitude, and Intention. By analysing demographic variables such as gender, education level, residence, and business family background, the study provides a comprehensive assessment of how different groups respond to Entrepreneurship training.

2. Review of Literature

Entrepreneurship Education has gained significant academic and policy attention over the last two decades due to its role in promoting innovation, economic growth, and employment generation. Scholars widely agree that entrepreneurship can be taught and learned through structured educational interventions that integrate theoretical knowledge with experiential learning.

Entrepreneurial Knowledge refers to an individual's understanding of business concepts, opportunity identification, market analysis, financial planning, and venture creation processes. Prior studies indicate that entrepreneurship education significantly enhances students' cognitive understanding of entrepreneurial processes and reduces uncertainty associated with business start-up activities. Knowledge acquisition serves as a foundational element that supports attitudinal change and intention formation.

Entrepreneurial Attitude reflects an individual's evaluative disposition toward entrepreneurship as a career option. Research highlights that attitudes are shaped by perceptions of feasibility, desirability, and social acceptance. Experiential pedagogies such as simulations, case studies, group discussions, and interactions with practicing entrepreneurs have been shown to positively influence students' entrepreneurial attitudes by enhancing self-efficacy and reducing fear of failure.

Entrepreneurial Intention has been extensively studied as a strong predictor of entrepreneurial behaviour. The Theory of Planned Behaviour posits that intention is influenced by attitude toward behaviour, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control. Numerous empirical studies confirm that entrepreneurship education positively affects entrepreneurial intention, especially when programs emphasize practical exposure and skill development.

Gender differences in entrepreneurship education outcomes have produced mixed findings. While traditional studies often reported higher entrepreneurial intention among males, recent research demonstrates that female students show equal or greater gains when exposed to supportive, structured entrepreneurship education environments. Similarly, family background plays a significant role; students from business families often exhibit stronger entrepreneurial orientation due to early exposure, role modelling, and informal learning.

Despite extensive research, limited empirical studies holistically examine changes in Knowledge, Attitude, and Intention simultaneously within short-duration EDPs using large samples. The present study contributes to the literature by addressing this gap and offering a comprehensive, data-driven evaluation of an intensive entrepreneurship intervention.

3. Objectives of the Study

The study was conducted with the following objectives:

- To assess the demographic profile of students participating in the Entrepreneurship Development Program.
- To evaluate the impact of the EDP on students' entrepreneurial Knowledge, Attitude, and Intention.
- To analyse gender-wise differences in entrepreneurial parameter improvement.
- To examine differences based on educational level (UG and PG).
- To study the influence of business family background on entrepreneurial outcomes.

4. Research Methodology

4.1. Research Design

The study employed a quantitative, pre-test and post-test research design to evaluate the effectiveness of the Entrepreneurship Development Program. This design enabled the measurement of changes in entrepreneurial parameters attributable to the intervention.

4.2. Sample and Participants

The study sample consisted of 502 students who successfully completed the three-day Entrepreneurship Development Program. Among them, 277 participants were undergraduate students and 225 were postgraduate students enrolled in MBA and MSc programs. The sample included participants from diverse gender, residential, and family business backgrounds, enhancing the robustness of the analysis.

4.3. Instrumentation

Data were collected using a structured questionnaire designed to measure Entrepreneurial Knowledge, Attitude, and Intention. The instrument consisted of multiple items for each parameter, measured on a standardized scale. Content validity was ensured through expert review, and the same instrument was administered before and after the program to assess change.

4.4. Procedure

Participants completed the pre-test questionnaire prior to the commencement of the EDP. The program included lectures, interactive discussions, case studies, group activities, and motivational sessions. Upon completion of the program, participants completed the post-test questionnaire. Ethical considerations such as voluntary participation and confidentiality were maintained throughout the study.

4.5. Data Analysis Techniques

Data were analysed using descriptive statistics, percentage analysis, and mean score comparisons. Parameter-wise and demographic-wise analyses were conducted to interpret the magnitude and direction of change across Knowledge, Attitude, and Intention.

5. Results and Analysis

5.1. Demographic Profile of Participants

The demographic analysis revealed diverse representation among participants. Of the 502 students, female participation was higher at the undergraduate level, while male participation was relatively higher among postgraduates. A majority of students belonged to urban areas, and a smaller proportion reported having a business family background.

This diversity allowed for meaningful comparison across demographic groups and enhanced the generalizability of the findings.

5.2. Gender-wise Positive Change in Entrepreneurial Parameters

The analysis showed that both male and female students demonstrated significant improvement across all three parameters. However, female participants exhibited higher positive change in Knowledge (56%), Attitude (55%), and Intention (57%) compared to male participants.

These findings suggest that the EDP was particularly effective in engaging female students and enhancing their entrepreneurial confidence and motivation.

5.3. Education-wise Positive Change in Entrepreneurial Parameters

Undergraduate students showed slightly higher improvement compared to postgraduate students across Knowledge, Attitude, and Intention. This indicates that early exposure to entrepreneurship education can have a strong influence on shaping students' entrepreneurial mindset.

5.4. Business Family Background and Entrepreneurial Change

Students from business families demonstrated remarkable improvement across all parameters. Prior exposure to business environments, combined with structured training, appears to reinforce entrepreneurial learning and intention.

5.5. Mean Improvement Analysis

The mean improvement scores indicate that Knowledge recorded the highest average improvement, followed by Attitude and Intention. This pattern suggests that while knowledge acquisition is immediate and substantial, attitudinal and intentional changes, though significant, may require sustained reinforcement.

5.6. Overall Change in Entrepreneurial Parameters

A large majority of participants exhibited positive change across all parameters. Improvements were observed in Knowledge (83%), Attitude (87%), and Intention (84%), confirming the overall effectiveness of the Entrepreneurship Development Program.

6. Discussion

The results of the study provide compelling empirical evidence supporting the effectiveness of short-term Entrepreneurship Development Programs in enhancing students' entrepreneurial competencies. The substantial improvement observed in Entrepreneurial Knowledge demonstrates the effectiveness of the program's content structure and delivery mechanisms. Knowledge gains indicate improved conceptual clarity regarding business opportunities, venture planning, and entrepreneurial processes.

The pronounced improvement in Entrepreneurial Attitude suggests that the program successfully influenced students' perceptions of entrepreneurship as a viable and desirable career option. Interactive and experiential learning components appear to have played a critical role in strengthening confidence, risk tolerance, and innovative thinking.

The positive shift in Entrepreneurial Intention is particularly significant, as intention is widely regarded as a strong antecedent of entrepreneurial behaviour. The findings indicate that the EDP not only informed students but also motivated them to consider entrepreneurship as a future career path.

Gender-wise analysis revealed higher levels of positive change among female participants across all parameters. This finding aligns with contemporary research suggesting that supportive entrepreneurship education environments can effectively empower female students and reduce traditional gender disparities in entrepreneurial intention.

Educational-level analysis showed stronger gains among undergraduate students, emphasizing the importance of early exposure to entrepreneurship education. Additionally, students from business families demonstrated higher levels of improvement, reinforcing the complementary role of prior exposure and formal education.

Overall, the findings corroborate existing theories and empirical studies, reaffirming that well-designed EDPs can foster holistic entrepreneurial development even within a short duration.

7. Implications of the Study

- Academic institutions should integrate structured EDPs into undergraduate and postgraduate curricula.
- Special emphasis should be placed on experiential learning methods to enhance attitude and intention.
- Targeted interventions can further support students without business family backgrounds.
- Policymakers can use such programs as tools for promoting youth entrepreneurship and self-employment.

8. Limitations of the Study

- Long-term impact on actual entrepreneurial behaviour was not assessed.
- Future studies may incorporate longitudinal designs and qualitative insights.

9. Conclusion

The study concludes that the Entrepreneurship Development Program had a significant and positive impact on students' entrepreneurial Knowledge, Attitude, and Intention. The findings reinforce the importance of Entrepreneurship Education in higher education and highlight its role in preparing students for Entrepreneurial careers. With appropriate scaling and continuous support, such programs can contribute meaningfully to national economic development and innovation ecosystems.

Compliance with ethical standards

Disclosure of conflict of interest

No conflict of interest to be disclosed.

Statement of informed consent

Informed consent was obtained from all individual participants included in the study.

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